

would be his home during the ensuing conflict. Located on the island of Guadalcanal and three months after the main conflict there, the Americans held a rudimentary airstrip called Henderson Field. Surprise confrontations and unplanned attacks stemming from the Japanese still plagued the island and resulted in many casualties. Obtaining and maintaining control of the waters surrounding the island was critical, and it is here that one of the most gruesome battles occurred and Vernon fought. On the night of November 12, 1942, as 14 ships from the Japanese fleet attacked the Henderson Field, the U.S.S. *Atlanta* and 12 other U.S. ships confronted the aggressors. After the battle, the area would be known as "Ironbottom Sound" due to the number of casualties and sunken debris. Twenty-seven ships attempted to destroy each other.

The U.S.S. *Atlanta*, by the end, had been hit 49 times before it ultimately sank. Although Vernon was the thirteenth man in his crew, he was the only survivor. Amidst flame and further attack, the U.S.S. *Atlanta* lost 170 men that night and although men of this generation were taught not to cry, a tear fell from Vern's eyes as he recounted the demise of this great ship and her crew. Only upon further examination did we discover that Vernon went from one firestorm to another because he also served in the battle of Midway and also in the Solomon Island Campaign. During these momentous times and occurrences, Vern was only 17 years of age.

Following the trials of war, Mr. Charron was employed by the Russell Stover Candies company and continued his position there for 49 years. While the U.S.S. *Atlanta* rests below 80 fathoms of water near Guadalcanal, Vern uses his experiences to light the fires of patriotism in youth to perpetuate the great spirit of America. His service is commendable as he gave of himself unselfishly to our remarkable nation. I applaud him and thank him for his efforts. He has certainly demonstrated the cost of freedom and his teachings will persist as testaments to America.

PROTECTING OUR WHISTLEBLOWERS

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2001

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduced legislation in Congress amending the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) to restore protections for federal employees who risk their jobs by disclosing waste, fraud, abuse or violations of law they witness on the job. This legislation is critical to restore the flow of information to Congress and the public about wrongdoing within the government. It is necessary because the original congressional intent has been partially nullified by certain judicial decisions. In 1989, Congress unanimously passed the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) and strengthened it in 1994. The new bill closes judicially created loopholes that have made the law useless in most circumstances. Recent decisions by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit have denied

protection for disclosures made as part of an employee's job duties or within the chain of command. The bill restores coverage in over 90 percent of the situations where it counts most for federal workers to have free speech rights—when they defend the public on the job.

The bill also makes permanent a free speech shield known as the "anti-gag statute" that Congress has passed annually for the last 13 years. It outlaws nondisclosure rules, agreements and other forms of gag orders that would cancel rights in the Whistleblower Protection Act and other good government statutes. In particular, it upholds the supremacy of a long-established law that workers have a right to notice that information is classified as secret for national security interests, before they can be held liable for releasing it. The necessity for the bill was increased last week by passage of a little noticed provision in the Intelligence Authorization Act for 2001. That provision functionally could make whistleblowers liable for criminal prosecution, based on speculation that unmarked information were classified.

We must reaffirm our support for whistleblowers. We made a serious commitment to federal workers in 1989 and Congress must ensure those protections stay in place. Congress must demonstrate once again its support for federal workers who risk everything to defend the public against fraud, waste, and abuse.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on July 18, I was unavoidably delayed during the vote on the Maloney Amendment to H.R. 2500. Accordingly, I was unable to vote on Roll Call Number 239. If I had been present I would have voted Nay.

HONORING JOSEPH MAXWELL CLIFTON

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I would like to remember the life of Joseph Maxwell "Max" Clifton, who passed away on July 12, 2001. He was a dedicated businessman and a compassionate individual.

In 1966, Max and his son-in-law started a car dealership, a Datsun franchise, in Pueblo County, Colorado. Establishing a market for these cars was a daunting task since there were less than five Datsuns registered in the area. His business was later purchased and was turned into a prosperous dealership in the community. The success of the business is a testament to the charisma and passion that Max exhibited at work. Max truly valued his

employees and knew how to manage the business successfully. Whether it was through summer picnics or just day-to-day comments, he was well respected and admired. Besides his automobile venture, Max owned a Christian radio station—KFEL. Max provided an example as to how to treat others, and his legacy will endure in the actions and hearts of those individuals.

Not only was Max an integral member of the community in Pueblo County, Max was also an important part of many peoples' hearts and minds. His memory will live through those he touched. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy and warmest regards to Max Clifton's family and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

H.R. 2273, THE NATIONAL BANK OFFSHORE ACTIVITIES ACT OF 2001

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2001

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have recently introduced HR 2273, the National Bank Offshore Activities Act of 2001, which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services on June 21, 2001. If enacted, this legislation would amend banking laws with respect to offshore activities, investments, and affiliations of national banks, which are chartered by the United States Comptroller of the Currency. Specifically, the legislation tightens regulations and closes loopholes in this country's supervision of the national banks it chartered when they operate overseas. In this global economy, banks chartered and regulated by our government must maintain the highest legal and ethical standards wherever they operate, yet far too often, our banks have not been as scrupulous as they should be when they get involved in overseas activities.

I am introducing this legislation because it has been brought to my attention that there have been recent allegations of great improprieties committed by our national banks chartered by the Comptroller of the Currency when they operate overseas, and that the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency has concluded it is powerless to act against these U.S. chartered banks under certain circumstances. There have even been allegations that some of our chartered banks have been involved in illegal activities, including possible money laundering, yet our own Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, which is supposed to investigate these matters, has determined that it does not have the power to stop these practices given its current enforcement authority. As I stand here today, I am aware that the ownership and control of one overseas company in particular has been transferred in a bankruptcy proceeding to a trustee approved by a group of U.S. chartered and foreign banks, and that there have been allegations that the appointed trustee in this matter has committed embezzlement, money laundering, and other crimes. Yet it is my understanding that the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency has not fully investigated these matters, and that they may need further enforcement